

J. F. HENDRY

The
Bombed Happiness

ROUTLEDGE

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To
MOTHER AND DAD

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LJUBLJANA IN WINTER

NOW the tree is pruned
Bird buries head in wing.
The song I should have sung
Dies out of sounding.

Leaves, that distilled thought
Like single startled birds,
Stumble images and words
In seaweed alphabet.

Branches are at war,
Pointing different ways
Like scarecrows in the snows
Through which none can steer.

EUROPE, 1939

CAST in a dice of bones I see the geese of Europe
Gabble in skeleton jigsaw, and their haltered anger
Scream a shark-teeth frost through splintering earth and lips.
In the cauldron of Kells I hear man-future, fingering
War and winter, barb a world in snow and baptise troops.

Thunder and the blood shout fight to the head in a dream;
Rat seed, and strangle harvests in the burning shadows
Where our arteries of wire shroud weed for squinting limbs,
And a lopped head, held up like a heart, crushed root and
 bloody
Brandishes strands of flesh, the fruit of a coughing womb.

Shall hands, I ask, clasp visionary on branches bathed
In bells, distilling valley peace where pears are ripe?

In place of pears the sandbags fall like plums across my path.
The trench that hides a seed of life may be its grave, trapped
Darkness where some ghostly statesman takes the pulse of
death.

Fear alone deals death to truth and hurls the dead like mud
Into a wind whose rain, a blood, soaks through the secret.
Secrets in the heart tear out the jangling entrails lions hide.
Their unbelief is death, and all these dead now walk up out
Of my speech of hands where love and living plead and
bleed.

LAMENT FOR POLAND

THIS sorrow's magnitude makes mockery of gesture.
No sympathy showered from balconies of intellect restores
These fields to innocence.
Corn and coloured kerchief of the gleaners there
Are blotted out in a night of blood and stars
Of grief, or fight in every conscience.

This peasant's sacrifice, the price of Europe's
Cowardice, acknowledges no conqueror.
He is sole heir
Of silent acres none can till, or even enter.
Holy alone for Poland are his tears.
Holy alone for Poland is his hope.

KALEMEGDAN: BEOGRAD, 1939

THESE turrets, crags and bastions castle a world in ruin,
Through the hollow tooth of a continent, nerve and body
gone,
My plundered sarcophagus.

Between bricks the blow-flies burrow, and the grape rears
Black and strangled nipples to a frost of rifles where
The bayonets hang like ice.

Unseen, sun and shadow sift a forest from these walls
And the river moves toward heaven, whose nationless rain
 writes pools
For epitaphs on Roman cerements.

All war and counter-war shall break here, at this rock—
Where water and sand and wind and sun make a rock
Of man, to strike through barb and torment.

CORNWALL

ALL the fallen horizons of waves
Purse upon the land gray lips
Whose lines are lines of distance and infinity.

Little white rats run, generations of invasion, while
Rivers are remorselessly shattered over
The stacked rock's black mysterious battlements,

Riddled needles that shroud no ghost
Save the sea's mist, sailing inland
Like one vast fleet of sail. Where, heavily, soil

Clings to the cliff with unsure fingers
And no birds sing, this broken earth is tribute to its men
Who ploughed precarious civilisation to the verge

Of sudden precipice, seen only
By the stone-coloured pipit, in a copper land,
Though scorned by time and all the elements' confusion.

LONDON BEFORE INVASION, 1940

WALLS and buildings stand here still, like shells,
Hold them to the ear. There are no echoes even
Of the seas that once were. That tide is out
Beyond the valleys and hills.

Days dawn and die, while the city assumes a distance of stars.
It is the absence of the heart
In the ebbing seas of heaven,
An ebbing beyond laughter and too tense for tears.

Now, imagination floats, a weed, on water's vacancy.
Faces of women, lit with conscience past or future
Of men gone, wear one garland of stone features.
Flowers have a girl's irrelevance, and mind is no prescience.

Flood-tides returning may bring with them blood and fire,
Blenching with wet panic spirit that must be rock.
May bring a future tossed and torn, as slippery as wrack.
All time adrift in torrents of blind war.

FOR THE U.S.S.R.

STRIDING down the blue starred midnight lawns
Over silvery levels of domed rivers,
Comes like a flush on the face of a woman, dawns
On our ashen cities, calming their salvoes of shivers,
The blown artillery song along your lighthouse
Front, where walls of death fall crushed as waves,
And burning trumpets, speaking voluminous light,
Break into needles and angels the trees and the graves.

A blue column of grapes climbing the blind horizon
Through leaves of laurel into a halo of sweet rain,
Plant the grenades, O violet Amazon,
No flood of ancestral tears shall drown Ukraine.
Your brother ghosts, opaque in the opal snows,
Breathe a life of knives through the dry bones of man's
penury,
And the great army of Leningrad stands up like a rose
Hanging out thunderous thorn flowers fire, wire and fury.

No automatic death stuttering out the last silence
Chills the Holy Men of Kiev lying amongst the guns.
No rat at the conscience, nor loud Laertes violence
Effaces the ruins of Austria or the dead Asturians,
But Kalmuck and Circassian, Turki, Cossack and Tatár,
Break the world asunder to unite it at the Pole,
And, battling for the heart, the free U.S.S.R.
Strikes lightning through the shuttles of the soul.

ODE ON A CHINESE SCROLL

O, INARTICULATE China,
We, the figures painted on your scroll,
Witness a London shored by the Yang-Tze,
An India standing upon Bataan,
The globe become the soul.

Shall we have no pity
Since pity's eye may not encompass
The vast Sargasso of human misery ?
Because pity is not enough
Shall we be pitiless ?

Until this banner wave through every soul
Growing outward till it fill the earth
Neither here nor in interstellar space
Shall gentleness and peace
Brighten the world with their birth.

Our truth and beauty
Speak with the tongues of flags. Shall they be furled :
Shall brutality and lie bring them dumb
To the scaffold of the centuries
O nation whose tears are the rivers of the world :

MIDNIGHT AIR-RAID

BEYOND our factories, like caterpillars curled in a sham
death,
Rivers signal their quicksilver treachery : and, in answer,
The guns of midnight pound from roots of earth
Bombarding with their radium mouth and prong of
cancer
Eating out the lungs of countries in a bubble of bloody
breath.

Sensitive fingers of searchlights pick the pockets of dark.
These are surgeons' pitiless forceps imprisoning in their
grip
Anaerobic death, there, in the heart of air, lurking
To burst the harmless tissues of cities. It is an antiseptis
In this world of blood, with an unsuspecting child, the
dawn, forgotten larks.

Now sirens unleash civilian anguish. In a reflex, they
Stumble from an underworld of dreams whom abortive
desire
(Pillared in moonlit limbs) makes gray.
Freedom's involuntary fighters, knowing no refuge save in
fiery
Consciousness, rampant light and the resolution of day.

Night that sealed their visions, drained all thought an hour
Ago, is now their bodyguard ; but real defence is an
illumination,
Ally of the sun, and fills their brain with staggering power
Where sanity tremors on madness, to beat down explosion
Of wind and the thunder's stupor, in a turbulent under-
ground anger.

Here artist and scientist concur to admire
A formal pattern of battle, where herring-bone squadrons
Elude the swaying bars of light, and white fire
From London's living furnace, flung up like a tilted cauldron,
Splits the atom of doom ; and makes man's floodlit march
one endless gyre.

LAMENT FOR A GENERATION

NOW the bones of many are the flutes of death
Wind pipes its laughter where the marrow was.
Its whistle is the emptiness of grief.
Our splitting days pitch like a ship that is piled
Upon reefs ; and every second springs a hole
Through which the waters of our lives rise in a trough.
Screened, we see the future in a haze
Of images, that sharpen into truth,
Foreshadowing sore experience and the frost
Of anger, till the cold cruel vision of the coming time is
focussed.

This grief is a spiked plant, dabbled with dorsal fins ;
Distiller of sorrow ; action grown barren ; war.
Scattering wide his tears, the airman tends
In vegetable bombs the roots of his own grief.
He weeps wild emptiness who sheds his blood.
Hands, limbs, mechanically bound,
Lose purpose in this path, ploughs sunken in a drift,
The long choked furrow we inherit, fear.
These are the ghostly cacti beg alms from the rains
Or barb an armoured ambush for sweet wells of God.

Still, a man in Galilee, whose seas know no division,
Walks the waves of reconciliation with his love ;

With his blood and with his tears treads down
Fountains of green vengeance. Bodily one
With the peal of bells, from the tower of his heart on
the hill
Are tolling, tolling, sounds of joy throughout
All exploration's gardens. Yet the blood-beaked ravens
Build foreboding nests within our minds,
Or harbour doom and prophesy his fate
And ours, the living embodiment of his wounds.

THE REFLEX OF HISTORY

GRAPPLING with the forces of ages, iron
Invisible wrestlers grip them in a vice.
Struggling against the harshness of the blood
None can deny the agony they live.
"None! None!" the four winds bluster; and "Oh no!"
The constant waters stammer in their head.
Surely spirits distortion can never be driven
Further than this? The lover's kiss touched by the frost
to a hiss?

All their days shall be December. Years
Roll crumpled toward them through a blacked-out dawn
Like mists of an evil vapour, and their dew is arsine.
Marching these men know without knowledge, see without
vision.
Death's boots down an endless lane drown hearing
Dog's mockery: cock's pride: richness of beggars, or
wonder
Of trees' concentration outlive their thunder,
Who peer into a world of guttering fear through gas-mask
tears.

Dissimulation's madmen, damming up the mind,
They march us wilfully back upon primeval
Memory. Though some willingly leave all
They know behind to follow the drumming wind,
All lose a sense of touch with the living and real,
All are lost in a labyrinthine terror and a Hell.

ON GUARD

BECALMED, the night came suddenly brimming
Over with voices, like a pool
Where fishes leap, all inarticulate and dumb.
I heard the late birds, sheep and lovers still
In the eloquence of delight
Announce their low complaint of day's demand,
The harshness of its light.

The haze of night was suddenly lit
By many moons, when, shortening their beams,
Searchlights for a moment dimmed
The random stars and fumbled on, but
Cast no shine upon the earth,
Inspired no future,
Myth or dream, in heart or hearth.

VIEW

THOUGH the leaves crowd, in galaxies of shaken stars,
Driving toward my window like a clipper-ship,
I turn away. In our society
Men demand surfeit of food, a place to sleep.
We cannot learn from leaves to live on air.

Though flowers are without desire, and all fruit falls soon
after
Fellowed, we live fearfully, hoard ourselves in lovers.
Our societies are not trees.
Nor have we joy like these tempestuous shivering leaves, or
Their collaboration of bells in untold laughter.

CHURCHILLIAN ODE

THE years grew tares for we did not tend them.
Time was eaten by moths in an age of gold
And the sun eclipsed in a cloud of ignorance.
The hours sprang holes as we stared, until now, the last,
We clasp in our hands a sheaf of bluebells in place
Of the rifle, and all our moments of laughter are frozen
Amid flaming towns, their echoes chill as the shadow of
soul's vengeance.

I bring you no song, no troubadour, but a hymn
Of embattled fury and anthems of fortitude to beat back
Piebald panic, calculation's treachery, lunacy's assault,
The seven fretful seas of disloyalty and abdication in high
places.

I offer you inspiration in crates of munitions. My poems are
Cool water to drink in bomb-craters. I erect wires of
barbed
Speech in action to cripple the deliberate hunter of human
freedom.

You will pardon us, Hitler, if perhaps our laughter is red.
If your soldiers, laughing with us, choke, and halt
As the blood bubbles trumpets in their throats. You will
Certainly pardon the laughter you launched as slaughter.

We still have a mind toward sun and essential joy, although
Giants carouse and skirl on our reeling horizon's fire.
You will pardon this soldier's Belgian doll, and those who
fought in flowers.

I might recite the names of cities with the culture of the
tongues
Of centuries: Wien: Praha: Warszawa: Rotterdam:
towns murdered
Like fair women by a cut-purse snuffing the crumbs of ruin,
Recite to no purpose. For Amiens burns to-day and Paris
to-morrow.
Time is afire with terror in the forest of our streets and
Eloquence marshals clearings arresting death's advance,
Cuts channels, floods dykes, builds a citadel for a people in
arms.

Though all the air is calamitous with weeping, O Hitler,
Silt of your wreckage, an ambition's debacle, and the debris
Piles inanity upon insanity too torn for the mind to under-
stand—
Yet I hear our horns at sea blare troopships.
I listen where whispers of victory drown the sirens of anguish,
And through the fog of murderous dreams
Drifting up, acrid and brown, I see the merciful,
Miraculous dissolution of bombast and lust, in an elemental
Marlborough.

SONNET IN WARTIME

THEY remember no cross, although they uproot rails
To forge from fingers swords, and fire from the looted sight.
They remember no hammer, no hands shod with nails
In the hawk-eyed rifle and beak of the bayonet

Stabbing and stabbing again through bloody holes
Into the water of victory. Forsaking the sun
For mirage and shadow of imagined hells,
Armed with an ass's jawbone, how shall they win :

Remembering no thorns thrust on any forehead
They press the pitiful face in an iron rim.
Although the years remember, and the rails,

The nails, the hammer and rifle beat in the temples loud
Still they have no memory. The heart is dead.
The blood is choked with thorn. They have killed Him.

THE BOMBED HAPPINESS

BRING me, O morning, a branch whose roots are
silence.

Wring from the living shapes of trees a breakwater
Scattering, blind and dumb, the white storms of a future
Loud with barren voices. None shall influence
The shy one, wild and wordlessly weaving a way
Among heart's foliage, to plunge, inspired,
Down upon love's awareness like a bird.

Here no seasons surge. Although the leaves fall,
Numbering the deaths of those unknown to history,
This year they tell no mere autumnal story.
Calm summery courage is the ghost that haunts each
house
Of brick or bone. Behind an old man's daze of eyes
Spring lurks, dew poised within a bud of tears.
There is no winter known to human will.

Now the proud may scamper to hide their pride.
Man's heart alone asserts death's insignificance.
The sun's hour halts, and time is one vast cloud.
Joys even in giant endeavour crack like bells
Despite tongue's eloquence. Whole cities fall.
And yet, O acting dry-rot on the tyranny of the times
The silence of the mad and bombed is its own balm.

POEM IN STORM

LOUD and symptomatic, sound
The gong of winter's clamour.
Swords of snow in the wind's hands
Strike through all our armour.

This is the land where no words come
Except in the shape of things,
A world where the truth is dumb
And blood the arbitrator of wrongs.

Pound in the crucible nest and petal,
Branches shipwrecked on a sea of leaves.
Men are garnered now for sheaves
In war that is the winter of the soul.

THE FOUR SEASONS OF WAR

"IT is the time to speak.
It is the time to break
As the prisms of the seasons break
Up seas in rains and visions. . . ."

AUTUMN

FLOOD is upon us. Furies illimitable cast
Chaos of green blade florid with mud across
My thumbnail landscape, where the ground and grass,
Two giants in tunic of khaki and green gaiters,
Scissor and blind all eyes that have beheld.
See this wrinkled tree, faith floating drowned
In the welter and clash of heedless, head-on waters,
Inert and dead as any seasoned soldier.
Never is destruction enough to halt the hunger of war's
winterring wind.
Nor shall time's end unravel, spaced like stars, its wreck
and holocaust.

Misted visions, guilt of statesmen and rabble,
Rob us of mind, breath, body and blood, to mint
This ruthless purity, this camouflage of world where
Futility multifold breathes fog over all rock :
Still Charles, fond friend and web of awareness, quick
Limbs like lilies skirting the lips of trenches, or
Pupils like nuts of autumn hanging ripe with melancholy.
On some beach of suffering his face is shaken like pebbles :
And that deception of all fire is his thought smudged,
whorled and bludgeoned, wholly
Betrayed, as he is beaten, lifeless, back upon all our own
four elements.

WINTER

ANSWERLESS as winter is this history, where maps
Of Europe curl like so many copper
Leaves by the edge of accidental water-
Falls, blown into everlasting might-have-been.
I look up through the tree that shielded men
With its belief and see the foliage scatter,

Driven in windy currents down the silent hall
Of destiny. In a night of sleet the innumerable flakes
Are Dead—whose memory stings us in the face like hail.

Each of us carries this winter's kernel within,
Whose winds envisage us, ploughing furrows of doom,
And rouse advancing breakers into violence. Then
Courage droops like a bud in the frosted calm
Of self-regard. This should be pruned and thrown
aside.

With none to teach us action or wishes' significance
From hour to hour we string across chasms of chance
Pontoon bridges to a provisional world
Where war is the only gardener and energy is whirled,
Unchannelled aggression, loose in vacancy like a scythed
wheel in the void.

SPRING

YET some tumbling homeward sea, in a green spring,
Tides us over widths of dawn and heaven.
Imponderable, immeasurable, bluer and bluer,
Opening like a whole world's flowering.
Here, in frozen waves, outlawed ubiquity, linger
Trees whose bark remembers currents from caverns
Of coiled time. On a shore and shingle of ice,
Over fields of mist and the white grass,
Her buds stand in the leaf-scar, and her sprays of
innocence
Break through the broken heart their snowdrops of
remembrance.

Joyous billows throwing up light hills
Wrestle delight from the stern frost wars hold
Like a sword over hours time ceaselessly distils.

Titanic tumult, mastered in a breath,
Melts the ice of bayonets. Formality withers,
Shattering man's gigantic iceberg—death.
Even earth and moon float in their wake
As they spread invisible wings. Drowned in opacity
We flee winter and the midnight tent quick as the bold
Colossal stride of light divinity. Stars and flowers shake.

SUMMER

SNOW banks the garden with its arabis.
Far out upon its seas white seagulls loop
The magic of white mimicry in trellised
Circles of incandescence and creation
Sung through hives of blue in the honeyed air.
Throughout man's temples sound the seasons' bells,
And ghosts of silence, loud in bomb reverberation,
Assassins of summer in these breathless chancels,
Swirl to his assault. Yet still the long and haunting waves
swoop
Upon listening ears the peace of shining and inviolate shores.

Girdling our breaking patience, dawn in the blood
Brings revelation in invisible flashes
From the roots of night whose tendrils are hope in the
heart
Polar with intuitions, the Northern Lights.
Though the world is not the heart it forever crushes
Shattered, into spontaneous summer lightning,
What is made of it may one day be the heart
Since clouds purge head and beard as white as bread
In this volcano's lava, food we need, the food of good
We soon shall eat, ambrosia of age consumed when we are
dead.

“It is the time to speak.
It is the time to break
As confident tides break
And as the wind speaks out its mind.”

QUESTION AND ANSWER

How we could ever have come to this pass :
Is all we are asking. Each of our
Bursts of anti-aircraft fire
Hangs a torn wound of questions in the air.

How we could ever, like cattle at grass,
Drift with shadowless clouds, unaware,
Into this era of lightnings and war :
There is no shelter, now or ever, from that answer.

THE RETURN

Now the soldier is come home.

He has fought his way back
To the faces of the gnome-children
With still magic in their glances.

Wearing the green birk in his hat
And clad in the brown earth
He has torn barbed sorrow down
With his bare hands.

He has gone out into the open fields
Superb, in final camouflage.

NIGHT FIGHTER

SPACE is his own mind through which he flies,
Commander of fire, still in the whirlwind.
High as the hawk above the world he has pinned
All his treasure upon these night skies.

There, voyage through a vaster dark must start.
Man's sole propeller is his human hope.
Winged are wishes, yet this earthbound heart
Has measured desire and given mankind scope.

Coursing like Icarus into the cauldron of the sun
He maps past, present and our future time.
Fighting for breath in the upper air he shall have won
Victory over the seasons even if he fall,

With autumn's ceremony of leaves, out of that last climb,
To shed his own strange peace upon us all.

THE WARRING WINTER

THE world exudes this death
In a language of signs and seasons.
Here it lies with the eyes of a moth
On the eaten heart of a rose.

I write this under his sign,
The crooked cross on a bomber-plane,
While pagan heath and oaken
Parliaments contract or crack
Under the frost of palsy.
Stripped and scattered, the drowned lives,
Innumerable as leaves,
Dance his rainy whirlpool.

All foliage, of tree or bough,
Yields to the peering hunter,
Whose tracks, invisible as winter,
Bulge white and huge as snow.

With an iron fist our hour
Strikes upon chilled air
And afterward, sound ascends
From the bell's icy throat.
Though death lie all around
Like lichen on a moat,
From the frozen tongue, still lolling,
Flows the living speech of the soul.

The fingers of this winter are scissors
Rifling earth's innocence. His legs are straw.
Fears are his birth. He is the scarecrow
Standing amidst a pang of unkempt grasses.

ADONAI

How if blood and water
In his body come together
Dissolution shall ensue.
There shall be no issue.
Flesh shall be a gushet
Wherein blood and waterfall,
Blades of parting shears,
May wither into Lethe,
All its mournful weather
Shrouded in a mist of tears.

How yet pity and all passion
Pray these two stilled hands
May hold out consummation
Of water and of blood.
To calm that loud
Tumult of the body,
The loveless, yearless yearning,
Twin to the blind and blue-lined
Pulsing wrestler of the veins who scorns
The patience and the grace of their libation.

How Moses and Elijah lay
Dead in Jerusalem's streets,
Felled by the blood of unbelieving day,
Floating in the waters of the night
For all to witness, quiet as lilies.
Opening, cup-wise, in a cloud,
Twin sons of thunder, when the stars
Of Heaven in their pride
Burst through the trees of Hell
To set the cold and crucified afire.

How, out of secret Samothrace
Stole the jealous Kabiri, guards
Against all ecstasy, who curdle
Milk and chill the youthful veins,
Inviolat in their union;
Switching fertile water's aspiration
Into blood's assassinate ambition,
Dealing leopard, panther, gryphon, buckler and shield;
Or to a lion and a unicorn bringing truce
Beneath a crown of mystic liberation.

THE DEAD LARCH

A WILD wind, exulting, loud in violence
Uprooting earthly happiness, laid low
My larch whose every living hesitancy
Has vanished from its leaves.
Hoarse and dry they break, like tinder,
And wander where the wind wanders.

Blind were the roots that fondled earth
And bland as beggar sightlessness the path
Tapped out, until rigidity told their touch
Upon a stone. Then, barred was the search of each
Slow tendril for invisible water
And dim, diamond minerals that lit their night.

No sunken stars restored them heaven.
They sank upon that barrier in vain.
Older trees and dead had withered underground
Whose blind reef, stoned in fossil, slew the blind
Root in earth as sun-heat slew the living
Leaf-flight in the air above.

THE WHITE HORSEMAN

(for Henry Treece)

THOUGH others forget, we shall always remember
The hush amongst the children when
The white horse, prancing in his power,
Sprang soundlessly over the sand of the arena,
Galloping, galloping through our circus hours.

He left no trace; and none could hear
His hoofbeats as he leapt impatience
Over obstacles, set at defiance
The baton's command, or bars of a gateway's fear,
To escape into night and the utmost distances.

With him, alas! he bore my soul
In the fragile ballerina dancing so well
On his saddle. I watch for her through smoked glass
When, soundless as ever among wide silences,
He breaks through the screen of our philosophies.

O he turns upon the thunder of the black cavalry!
He looms among the shoutings and the gestures
Louder than Laertes of this brassy war.
He shines immaculate drama through their rifflery,
Enemy of the devil and his legionary years.

TWO SONNETS ON CONSCIENCE

I

I WALK the inmost streets of a barren city
Over waved floors paved with a still
Sea-urchin grief, where ruin hovers, broken
As callous rock, in a heart's house, or our
Castaway soul, a high-and-dry hopeless weed.

The vultures of the dark leave off this offal.
Eyes are their swag, and our most sacred seed.
O marble is memory when colossal pity
Purges in each face a frozen sea-horror
I dare not utter ; within whose inmost consciousness
Pour ceaseless waterfalls all echoing
Reverberations where never memory was,
Down streams more deeply silted than the blood we let,
Where all conscience is a dawn in the very root of light.

II

HEAVEN and the stars may roof the mind we own
Within, but this forever white light's constancy,
A bright, sharp foam whose miracle is grace, is all we
Know we lack and never yet have grown.
Therefore I pace the choked roads of the heart
Praying its wilderness of secret flowers
Preserve their root there ; master a hard and plaster hate
Bred in the bone and stone ; drenching with showers'
Mystery dark lives, dark toils of evil
And ancestral dreams wherein we shelter as in pits
Until above us, on the morrows level,
Roar the wild beasts bursting out of night,
Tilting the hourglass of the conscience as they roam and fight
Beside the tigers tearing apart this street, this heart.

MONOLOGUE FOR LORCA

THE sun, peeled to pieces like an orange,
Litters the corners of Europe, so that
It is day here and night there,
Light in one land and darkness in another.

Your black bull, Federico, has charged the noon
And, unbelievably, gored it through.
Now it wears on one of its horns, sun, like a halo.
The black bull, planted foursquare upon Spain.

There can never be dawn again until it is blinded or slain,
The whole horizon laid as yoke upon its shoulders.
We are afraid now to sing your songs, for
Each one is a "banderillo," quivering in the bull,
A glittering bright star-wound in the side of night.
Together they dance a thousand reflections of the sun's
Waves, made whole in a river of music, your people's river.
You are dead, Federico, but this is no lament.

I am amazed instead to see a dead man's
Fight for the sun in a desolate darkened arena
Where the bull, blind with the blood of a continent,
Exhausts itself rushing upon a ghost.

THE CONSTANT NORTH

ENCOMPASS me, my lover,
With your eyes' wide calm.
Though noonday shadows are assembling doom,
The sun remains when I remember them;
And death, if it should come,
Must fall like quiet snow from such clear skies.

Minutes we snatched from the unkind winds
Are grown into daffodils by the sea's
Edge, mocking its green miseries;
Yet I seek you hourly still, over
A new Atlantis loneliness, blind
As a restless needle held by the constant north
we always have in mind.

MOSES

RISEN from his agony into the shadow
Soon he shall receive the magic commandment
Whipping the snake into a rod of will.
All the desert of his being a meadow
Running sweet with waters that were torment
He rests his head upon the invisible hill.
There are people to lead into an unknown land
Discovered in his mind: people who are blind.

Even with him there is nothing they can see.
He shall destroy their barren calf of gold
And shatter all their futile images
To bring them over his divided sea
Into that country, new as it is old,
Where they are brother to the gale that rages.

PORTRAIT OF DAVID

OUT of a lightning void who clutched blue rivers
Spins a shell-flower head on sea-screened floors.
An echo coils an ear in Fingal's Cave
Along whose flickering shores he plucked his eyes
And hirples lighthouse space down pebbled chin.

His frowning knuckles doubling are the rainbow
Clenching fists of cloudy Scottish thunder.
Ribs, once wrecked ships sunk on a broken beach,
Now swell a chest of treasure in screw sand, or
Blast a southron air with Highland spleen.

Sabre-toothed, the tiger Hebrides thrust
And parry sea. That sleeping lipline pins
On space awakened purpose, is a mastodon.
A gnarled kneecap, or an elm down a glen,
Forge spring-knots for the kilted saunterers.

Out of the dark-green jar who grasped light arching,
Hoards electric sun in branching arms.
The mottled trunk-one, wrenched from silver birch,
Remembers brindling Cluny in a Braemar storm,
Fire-talk, venison, we happy winterers.

THE LIVING LARCH

DAY'S blind winds may roar
Upon you, like the sea
Against a stubborn pier.
They rouse you but to ecstasy,
A river of light leaves, hoar
Within your quivering walls,
A fountain that never falls.

Night shall still these storm-amassing
Winds and force their cloudy armies
In a slow rout through space.
I see your outstretched boughs
Thrown over us, dark with blessing,
And know their returning peace
Can never, never cease.

LEDA

SHE feeds upon light as the swan feeds,
Reeds and the fish, among green dreams.
She fights through fog where the sun bleeds
White as the fume upon dim streams.
She drifts with the swan where lilies rule
Swift mirrors of war's immortal whirlpool.

ORPHEUS

THE poet sings alone, where others flee.
Plucking the strings of Heaven and of Hell
In him the world chimes like a great bell
Tolling grief and carillons of glee.
This prince who kissed awake Eurydike
Lost her to darkness when, instead of singing
Fountains from the depths of history
He wished to see what stars have seen and
sing.
Therefore he hangs his lyre upon a tree
Whose shattered leaves of melody are token
None may play where every string is broken.
The poet sings alone, where others flee.

THE TOY SOLDIER

ATTICA lives. Greece lives. And Rome.
Toys broken by a child's barbarity still
Live. How I remember my soldiers wearing
Matches as wooden legs. Some had even two.

For me they were heroes, and also partly monuments.
The lost limb lived somewhere. They could
Recover it when they cast away the wood.
Meanwhile they stumped about

Like humans pretending to be all alive.
This was the first death. There were many others.
None of them final for such a soldier.
None of them final for what we only know as symbol.

GOLGOTHA

CROW, wooden lightning, from a sky of thorn,
O cross-ribbed Adam, tumbled hill of blood,
While blinded shell and body's thunder churn
My ear to worm-ball and tongue to lipless stone.

Our wound is night, bridged in the frigid hours;
God's manna strung upon a nail spins dawn
In skull-tolled bell behind straw eyes, and hoods
A set dog barking at the rat of heart.

One small sind in this ash blows up world fire.
A struck prince launches legend at the dead,
His healing voice the speech and severed core
Of guttering earth, and the stilled tides.

Where forests are the history of man
An eye of time is blinded by this bone.

INVERBEG

SLICED with shade and scarred with snow
A mountain breaks like Mosaic rock
And through the lilt of mist there flow
Restless rivers of pebbles, pocked
And speckled, where moss and the centuries grow.

Tree, married to cloud as stem is to feather,
Branches and straddles the convex of sky.
Death is aflame in the bracken where heather
Rears semaphore smoke into high
Blue messenger fire through soundless weather.

Below, like bees, the ivies swarm.
Cast in leaping veins, their trunk, a crippled
Animal of thighs pounced from loch-water, storms
The slated shores of the past into ripples
Interpreting man's fretted cuneiform.

TIR-NAN-OG

A MAN is born, a man dies,
And in between are miseries.

In between he is alive
But cannot be allowed to live

Since, body's hunger never fed
The mind is never satisfied

And hands and feet and head and eyes
Are hourly humbled to the knees.

A man dies, a man is born,
And in between a burden borne.

In between, by force of love,
A grief in life is made alive

Whose mind is more than satisfied
And body's hunger always fed,

Whose hands rise up from feet and knees,
Encircle head and rub the eyes.

BALLET DANCER

ARE you a dryad from a tree
A green nymph from the sea,
Swan-in-air, love-in-air,
Poised on tiptoe like a flare :
You are judgement through reflection.
You are joy in recollection.
Now the moon you cup your face
And curving a finger, create space :
Now dancing abreast of time, in the sun's fire,
With a shadow-bow you make humble your desire.

PICASSO FOR GUERNICA

FROZEN in the fright of light chill skull and spine
Droop bone, shriek splinters sharper than the Bren,
Starve Franco stroke and stave the hooves of bulls.
I am the arm thrust candle through the wall.

Up cities crack firelaughter, the furious
Minutes, and bark a ruin at man in
His sealoneliness, hair rearing fin-rays.
I am the spinning coil distilled eyes' iron.

Neigh, horse, terror through steel teeth and a thicket
Of bricks ! Beam an eye-bomb, cellar, and stride
Nerve, peeled pupil's enamel, rhomboid head !
I am the tiled blind hand plunged bulb in socket.

Splint for the shriven shin, I foster man-trump out
Of festered history, sprout pointed fingers
Where an afterbirth is dung and rubble-teat.
I am the world in an eyeball, axis of anger.

I AND THE EVENING

IN every footstep of the evening
Wrapped in a gold and silver silence
I hear the sorrow of my brother Earth
And see the Holy Dead stand round
Breathless as the impotence of flowers
In the great summer of eternity.

Our Angel Protector flutters vast blue wings
Behind a tumbled babe in the clouds.
Mounting the white horse of space he charges
Like a sea upon the images of this world.
Warning on the waters with his light
His vision heals the refractions of their chaos.

In the dust of a moonbeam's time I see
Blake and Socrates kindle glory.
Creation is their fear become wonder, and Beauty
Is all the great contemporary.
Time is their honour illumining the Sun.
The evening is a ray soon gone.